

Ticket to Ride

A Puget Sound regional project demonstrating efficiencies in brokering publicly funded transportation services

Ultimate Goal

Simplify how individuals, businesses and agencies can efficiently plan, book, and pay for quality transportation delivery in the Puget Sound region.

The Situation

According to a 2003 United States General Accounting Office (GAO) report,"¹ sixty-two federal programs currently spend in excess of \$2.4 billion annually for a variety of transportation services for the 100 million+ people who are transportation disadvantaged.² This figure does not include the federal funds spent on transporting non-emergency Medicare beneficiaries, nor the federal portion of transporting children in public school systems.

Delivery of these multiple transportation services at the state and local levels often are not coordinated due to categorical federal funding restrictions and reporting requirements. This results in duplication of efforts and inefficiencies in service delivery. For example, single passengers are often transported to and from the same location in multiple publicly funded vehicles. Furthermore, accessing publicly-funded trips can be very complex and confusing for individuals, especially if they are eligible for more than one transportation program.

Background

Pierce, Snohomish and King County are committed to coordinating all modes of public and private transportation to better serve people with special transportation needs in the Puget Sound region. All three counties have developed broad-based stakeholder groups, including transit, human services agencies, school districts, private and non-profit providers, advocates, and/or transportation consumers. King County is currently assessing how to best coordinate their transportation resources to better address unmet needs, and Pierce and Snohomish have begun implementing coordinated transportation plans.

These coordinated transportation programs strive to efficiently link transportation disadvantaged passengers with appropriate transportation carriers. Transportation brokerage call centers are designed to provide this unique function. They provide a local, single point of contact for a multitude of passengers and their third party "payer" agencies. The brokerage achieves cost-effectiveness through coordinated, appropriate ride sharing among private and public providers, resulting in fewer duplicated trips. A Pierce County model of this approach follows.

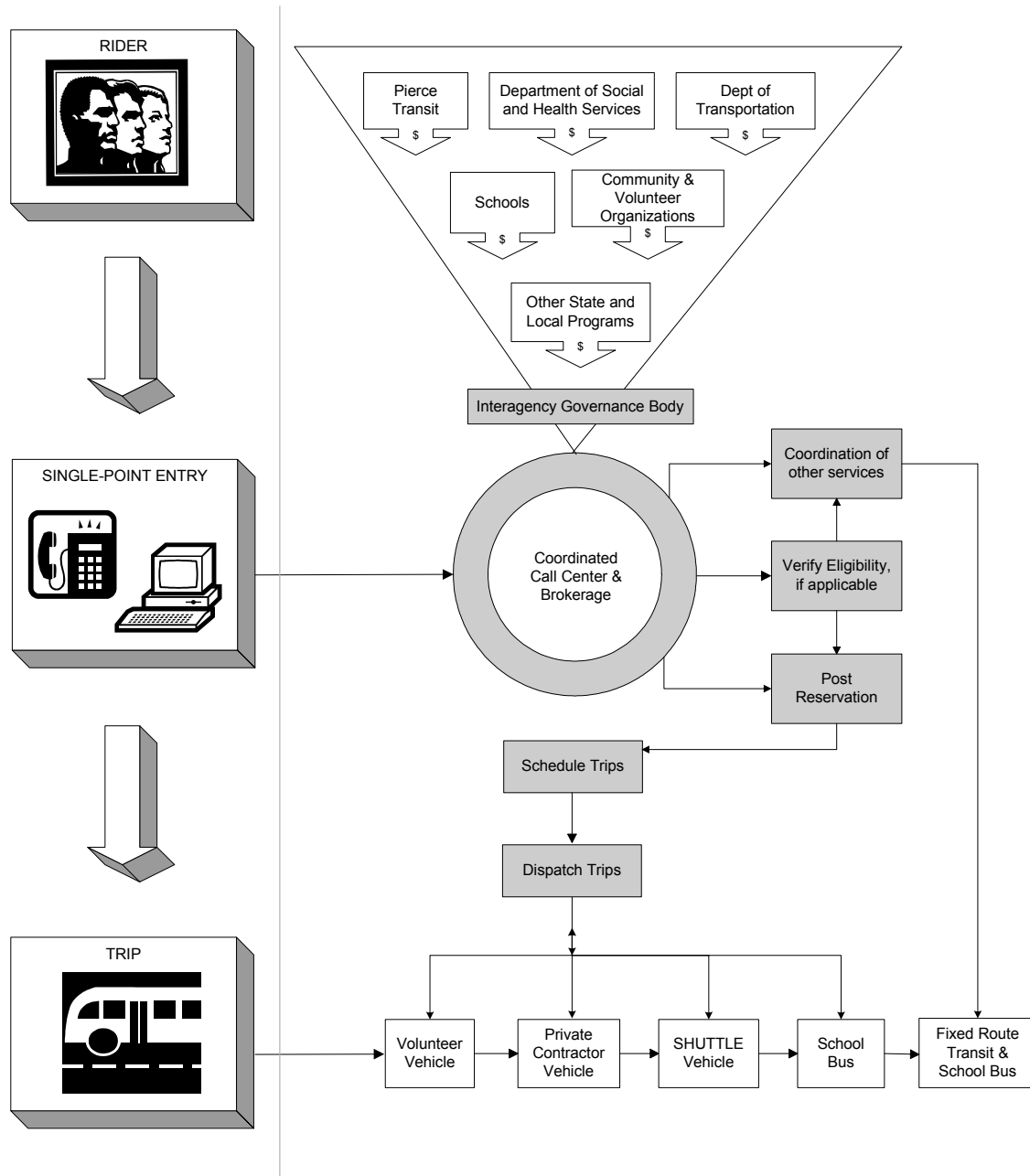
¹ U.S. General Accounting Office Report on "Transportation Disadvantaged Populations: Many Federal Programs Fund Transportation Services, But Obstacles to Coordination Persist." Testimony before the Committees on Transportation and Infrastructure and Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives, for release on May 1, 2003

² Transportation disadvantaged people are unable to transport themselves due to age, income, or disability.

Ticket to Ride

Coordinated Transportation System

Coordinated Process Model



Ticket to Ride

Project Objectives

1. **Streamlined Funding:** Direct federal, state, and local transportation dollars³ through a coordinated call center/brokerage system in each of the three participating counties – King, Pierce and Snohomish.
2. **Streamlined Reporting:** Automate and streamline federal and state reporting for local recipients of transportation dollars.
3. **Technology As A Tool:** Assess the technical ability to integrate trip schedule information of the Medicaid transportation brokers, transit agencies, and school programs, providing the ability to:
 - ❑ Coordinate eligibility and trip requirements of passengers
 - ❑ Create a schedule of optimized trips using a variety of providers (public and private)
 - ❑ Arrange for the lowest cost, most appropriate trip for passengers while increasing efficiency through reduced “deadheading”
4. **Client-Centered Trip Delivery:** Expand and fully fund the web-based Washington and Oregon Bi-State Trip Planner so that individuals, businesses, and agencies can ***plan the itinerary of a trip*** from origin to destination, and ***book and pay*** for the trip.
 - ❑ multiple private and public transportation providers could be utilized per trip
 - ❑ ridesharing and transfers to fixed-route services could be utilized
 - ❑ choices offered to the customer would be based on geography, eligibility, and trip needs
 - ❑ itineraries would be presented in order of lowest cost, most appropriate (publicly funded) versus preferred mode and shortest time options (private pay)
 - ❑ brokers would assist individuals with reserving appropriate publicly funded trips
5. **Smart Card:** Expand the Washington State Puget Sound Smart Card project so that individuals, businesses, and agencies can purchase fixed ***and*** demand response trips with the Smart Card.
6. **National Phone Lines:** Coordinate transportation information with the national 211 and 511 information and referral lines

³ Sources to be specified by stakeholders

Ticket to Ride

Benefits

1. Unmet transportation needs of seniors, children and people with disabilities could be better met by reinvesting cost efficiencies
2. More people will have access to transportation – the lifeline to employment, medical treatment, social interaction, and overall quality of life
3. Tax payer dollars are stretched further
4. The project supports the coordinated transportation partnerships and strategic plans of the participating counties
5. The project leverages existing national, federal, state and locally funded projects

Federal Request

1. Flexibility in co-mingling the identified sixty-two federal transportation funds for the transportation disadvantaged
2. Designation of a single agency responsible for distributing federal transportation dollars for the transportation disadvantaged
3. Ability to streamline reporting requirements of multiple federal and state transportation funders
4. \$2 million in seed dollars to plan and implement the first phase of the project
5. Federal leadership by active federal participation on project oversight and technical workgroups